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The Works of Chopin.

[The following is the substance of a little pamphlet published in London some years since, without date or name of author, entitled "An Essay on the Works of Frederic Chopin." It is written in rather a high-flown and extravagant style of eulogy, although it is in the main appreciative. It is in fact an uncommonly clever music-seller's puff, issued by the London publishers of Chopin's music. Retrenching some of its most transcendental superfluities, we think it will not be uninteresting to those who are curious to know the extent and character of this poet-pianist's compositions.]

The prevailing tone of the most popular piano-forte music of the present day is unhealthy and vicious in the extreme. Morbid sentimentality has usurped the prerogatives of tenderness and of passion, while passages of mere finger dexterity preside over what was once the dwelling-place of pure melody and ingenious contrivance. The love of beautiful and unaffected harmony seems wholly dead in the bosoms of modern composers, who, influenced by the clever trickery developed in the music of M. M. and a host of others, think of nothing but new modes of showing how an idea, in itself absolutely phantasmal, shall be presented in new forms of clap-trap—shall be arpeggiated into fresh showers of triviality. With the exceptions of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Henri Reber, Stephen Heller, Adolph Henselt, Charles Mayer, William Sterndale Bennett, and the subject of the present essay, there is scarcely an existing piano-forte composer who does not repeatedly mistake and substitute inflation for energy—maudlin mock sentiment for true feeling—vapid roulades, for natural brilliancy. * * *

To begin then with Frederic Chopin, an illustrious instance of pure and unworldly genius, of true and artistic intelligence—unbending to the polyhedric wand of motley fashion—depriving the hollow popularity awarded by an ill-judging and unreflecting mob—laughing at the sneers of shallow critics, who, unable to comprehend "the subtle-souled psychologisms" of real genius, lay bare to the public their plenary ignorance, and, ill fitted to appreciate the unvitiated motives of

exalted merit, expose the dullness of their feeble capacity to the contempt of the ill-natured, and the pity of the wise. On surveying the entire works of Frederic Chopin, we find their grand characteristic to be—a profoundly poetic feeling, which involves a large degree of the transcendental and mystic—is essentially and invariably of passionate tendency, of melancholy impression, and metaphysical coloring. Chopin does not carry off your feeling by storm, and leave you in a mingled maze of wonder and dismay; he lulls your senses in the most delicious repose, intoxicates them with bewitching and unceasing melody, clad in the richest and most exquisite harmony—a harmony which abounds in striking and original features, in new and unexpected combinations. The first works which Chopin presented to the world, though, of course, not endowed with the decisive and individual character of his now perfected style, clearly pronounced themselves the offspring of a vigorous intellect—of energetic origination, untrammelled by conventionalities, unfettered by pedantry. As he has progressed, his style has grown up and expanded like some gootly tree, which casts the shadow of exuberant foliage over a labyrinth of untrodden paths; a refuge for all beautiful and fantastic shapes—children of his etherial fancy, of his plastic and glowing imagination. The extent and variety of his works, which are almost wholly devoted to the piano-forte, plainly indicate the unequalled fertility—the overflowing luxuriance of his invention—the endless diversity—the unprecedented abundance of his resources.

His CONCERTOS—only surpassed, if indeed they be surpassed, by those of the great Beethoven—are vast in their conception, bold in their outline, rich in their motives, minutely and dexterously finished in their details. The first, in E minor, Op. 11, (dedicated by Chopin to his friend and fellow-artist, Kalkbrenner, whose enthusiastic admiration of him and his works is as well known, as it is frequently and ardently expressed) combines all the passion and intense excitement of the great modern schools, with the distinct plan, and clear development, of the old masters; the learning of a Sebastian Bach is joined to the ideality of a Mendelssohn, the untiring melody of a Rossini, the mystic grandeur of a Weber, and the dreamy restlessness of a Sterndale Bennett—the whole colored with the delicious peculiarities of Chopin's own piquant and charming manner, seasoned with the infinite and captivating graces which distinguish and place him apart from, and beyond the reach of all other modern composers. * * *

The second Concerto, in F minor, has, in addition to the above named enviable characteristics, an originality so marked, as to place it beyond the pale of all ordinary compositions of the kind. Its difficulties, though enormous, are amply compensated by the fascination of its melody, the richness of its harmonies, and the ingenious management of its orchestral accompaniments. * * * Next in importance to the Concertos, must be ranked those inimitable STUDIES, which have effected more for the rapid advancement of pianoforte playing to the uttermost limits of perfection, than any elementary works that are extant. The universal reception of these, at all the great musical schools throughout Europe, is an irrefutable argument in favor of their intrinsic excellence. They comprehend

every modification of style necessary for the attainment of a thorough mastery over the piano-forte; from the grand to the playful—from the grave to the gay—from the elaborate to the simple—from the sublime to the beautiful—every shadow of sentiment is depicted—every mood of passion—every diversity of phrase—is not merely touched upon, but thoroughly and effectively accomplished. To obtain an entire command over these splendid studies, (which command involves an undoubted mastership over every difficulty that modern or ancient piano-forte music presents,) it is advisable to commence with a careful practice of the twenty-four PRELUDES, through all the keys, (Op. 28,) which are evidently intended by the composer as a preface to his more elaborate work. These charming sketches might be easily mistaken for some of the lighter effusions of Sebastian Bach, from the remarkable adherence to the severe diatonic school of progressions, (smacking so strongly of the manner of the old masters,) for which they are distinguished—suggesting one proof among a hundred, of the large range of Chopin's musical reading, which evidently has been directed to the works of every composer whose labors are worth knowing. One thing is certain, viz.—to play with the proper feeling and correct execution, the preludes and studies of Chopin, is to be, neither more nor less than a finished pianist—and, moreover—to comprehend them thoroughly, to give a life and a tongue to their infinite and most eloquent subtleties of expression—involves the necessity of being in no less degree a poet than a pianist—a philosophical thinker than a musician. Common-place is instinctively avoided in all the works of Chopin—a stale cadence, or a trite progression—a hum-drum subject, or a worn-out passage—a vulgar twist of the melody, or a hackneyed sequence—a meagre harmony, or an unskilful counterpoint—may in vain be looked for throughout the entire range of his compositions, the prevailing characteristics of which are, a feeling as uncommon as beautiful—a treatment as original as felicitous—a melody and a harmony as new, fresh, vigorous and striking as they are utterly unexpected and out of the ordinary track. In taking up one of the works of Chopin, you are entering, as it were, a fairy-land, untrodden by human footsteps—a path hitherto unfrequented but by the great composer himself; and a faith and a devotion, a desire to appreciate and a determination to understand, are absolutely necessary to do it anything like adequate justice. As Coleridge remarks, in reference to the inspired truths of Holy Writ, "There are more beautiful things that find us, rather than are found by us, more great ideas that come to us, rather than we go to them," in the compositions of Chopin, than in those of almost any other author existing or dead, if we except, perhaps, Bach, Beethoven and Mendelssohn Bartholdy.

Among the lesser compositions of Chopin, the "MAZURKAS," those "cabinet pictures," as Liszt has happily designated them—those green spots in the desert—those quaint snatches of melancholy song—those outpourings of an unworldly and trustful soul—those musical floods of tears and gushes of pure joyfulness—those exquisite embodiments of fugitive thoughts—those sweet complaints of unacknowledged genius—stand alone and unrivalled. These are wholly and individually creations of Chopin, which none have

dared to imitate, (for who, indeed, could aspire to imitate that which is inimitable?) portraying in vivid colors the patriotism and home-feeling of the great Polish composer, (we need hardly remind our readers that Poland boasts the honor of having given birth to Chopin,) affording vent in passionate eloquence to the beautiful and secret thoughts of his guileless heart. Of these there are eight sets, all of the rarest loveliness, sparkling with genius, redolent with fragrant thought—very nosegays of sweet and balmy melody. If we have a preference, where all is beauty unsurpassed, it is for the first and sixth sets, which for quaint and happy melody, rich and delicious harmony, ingenious and novel treatment, are unrivalled since music was an art. How often have we turned our laughter into tears, our tears into laughter, by the aid of these delicate idealisms, these sweet glimpses of a world far from our own,

"Where music, and moonlight, and beauty are one!"

these dear confessions of a bashful mind, retiring within the mantle of its own loveliness, from very modesty of its rare deserts! * * *

Another interesting feature among the miscellaneous works of Chopin, is comprised in the NOCTURNES, a species of composition which he has carried out to a greater degree of perfection than any other author. On these elegant sketches, all the *finesse*, all the coquetry, all the infinitesimal delicacies, all the minute and barely perceptible graces, which, conglomerated into a whole, form what is termed *style*, must be lavished, in order to interpret fairly their infinite meaning—to develop completely their manifold beauties. They are triumphant answers to the aspersers of Chopin, who, from inability to seize his intentions, by reason of their intense subtlety—who, from incapability of bringing out his phrases, owing to a lack of the *legato* quality in their playing, are bold enough to accuse him of a deficiency in melody, a requisite which, strange to say, he possesses in a more remarkable degree than any other living composer for the piano. To hear one of these eloquent streams of pure loveliness delivered by such pianists as J. Rosenhain, F. Liszt, E. Perkhert, Wm. Holmes, or H. Field, a pleasure we have frequently enjoyed, is the very transcendancy of musical delight. Every one of these is a perfect gem; we would not disparage the rest by giving a preference to any one of them; they are, without an exception, veritable *chef d'œuvres* of their kind, and would have placed Chopin in the first rank of modern composers had he indited nothing else. There are fourteen of them, all of which are as dear to us as close relationship can make them. * * *

In his POLONAISES too, of which he has written seven, of various lengths and forms, Chopin has marched many strides beyond the vulgar track of the generality of such things. These are remarkable for a boldness of phraseology, a decision of character, a masterly continuousness of purpose, and a sparkling brilliancy of passage, which are entirely out of the reach of second-rate thinkers, as is amply manifested by the failure of one and all the attempts to ape their peculiarities, which are daily issuing from the hands of the engravers, and die as soon as they are born, causing the shelves of the publishers to groan under excess of corruption and decay. Chopin, in his Polonaises, and in his Mazurkas, has aimed at those characteristics which distinguish the national music of his country so markedly from that of all others—that quaint idiosyncrasy—that identical wildness and fantasticality—that delicious mingling of the sad and the cheerful, which invariably and forcibly individualize the music of those northern countries, whose languages delight in combinations of consonants, *needf, hlzwrbs*—wise, such as the Russian and Polish. As mere pieces of display, they are equal, if not superior, to those noted compositions of the same class which have proceeded from the inspired pen of Weber, and from the marked effect they always produce on a mixed auditory, are admirably calculated for drawing-room display. * * *

The WALTZES of Chopin are distinct from those of any other composer, by reason of their more fluent melody, their greater length, their

superior elaboration, their ampler resources of harmony, and other characteristics of an elegant and cultivated mind. Of these there are five, all of extreme beauty and singular originality, and far superior to anything else of the class extant. If we may be allowed to entertain a preference, we should select that exquisitely plaintive morceau in A minor, (No. 2 of "*Trois Grandes Valses*," Op. 34) which from the first bar to the last is of most unspotted loveliness, or that animated torrent of exultation, "*L'Invitation pour la danse*," which, for continued and energetic brilliancy, for fresh and invigorating melody, has scarcely a parallel.

Besides these, there are the BALLADES (three of them), a species of songs without words, equal in their way to those of the celebrated Mendelssohn, though in no way whatever, be it understood, an imitation of them. They require an infinitude of varied expression in their performance, a delicacy of touch, a sureness in the execution of passages, and a *singing* tone, of which only intellectual pianists can boast, but which are stringently imperative in order to their entire appreciation. They will not endure a slovenly, scrambling, uncertain mode of playing; the performer must think as a poet, and possess the power of giving a reality to his impulses through the medium of remarkable manual dexterity. We have frequently met with instances of very remarkable musicians, who have been excluded from the comprehension of Chopin's music simply from inability to render it exactly according to the intentions of the composer, by reason of a want of those finger-requisites, which are at least half the battle in the formation of a perfect pianist; laboring under this deficiency, they have rashly denied Chopin that rare distinction with which the first authorities in Europe have endowed him, until, chance favoring them to the hearing of one of his compositions, correctly and thoroughly mastered by some pianist *de la première force*, they have immediately, and with the ready frankness and liberality only appertaining to *real talent*, owned the error of the impression under which they had been laboring, and ranked themselves thence-forward among the crowd of his most enthusiastic admirers. We mention this especially, because the BALLADES, more so almost than any others of the works of Chopin, absolutely insist upon a finish of performance, only attainable by severe study, and a strong desire to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest." "He that hath ears to hear let him hear."—He who enters upon the study of Chopin's poetical music with the heartlessness of an infidel, or the indifference of a sceptic, will be at a discount for his trouble; let him cease his endeavors to attain, what, to him, FROM LACK OF FAITH, is unattainable; let him descend from the loftiest clouds of ideal sublimity, and grovel amid the mire of the mindless mummery of the popular composers, and the unmythical in Art—Chopin is beyond him. He, on the other hand, who approaches him with a veneration, and a faith, and a love, pre-created by the coupling of anticipation and desire, will find, to his delight, his most extravagant preconceptions realized, and will at once declare, that Chopin is by far the most poetical, by many degrees the most purely intellectual of modern piano-forte writers.

Perhaps one of the most extraordinary of all the works of Chopin, both on account of its exceeding originality, and its strangely fantastic structure, is the grand SONATA, in the sullen and moody key in B flat minor. This wild and gloomy rhapsody is precisely fitted for a certain class of enthusiasts, who would absolutely revel in its phantasmagorical kaleidoscope. * * *

In his TRIO, for piano-forte, violin, and violoncello, Chopin has had to contend against the popularity of the lighter effusions of Reissiger, which are almost the life and soul of the great body of amateurs—and—a harder task still—against the gorgeous imagination of a Beethoven, the oriental elaboration of a Spohr, the mystic playfulness of a Kalliwoda, the graceful melody of a Dusek, the wild unearthliness of a Weber, the pure classicality of a Reber, the earnest intensity of a Mendelssohn, and the flowing facility of a Hummel;—yet, we feel bound to say, he has succeeded in producing

a work which steers clear of the peculiarities of each of the schools—the flimsy, the poetical, the strictly classical, &c., as above eminently represented—a work of a mixed kind, that, were it more generally known, would be hailed with delight by the lovers of this most interesting and thoroughly domestic species of chamber music. Its superior attraction to the *trios* of Reissiger depends mainly on the higher beauty of the materials of which it is composed—since, as a matter of mere execution, it is perfectly within reach of the great mass of *trio* players. Its profound thoughtfulness will conduce to the elevation of the common feeling for music of the general amateur, and raise him in his own estimation, by the mere consciousness of his being able to feel and appreciate music of so grave and lofty a character—while, on the other hand, it will facilitate his powers of execution from the novelty of its forms of passage, and the freshness of its combinations, which place it wholly apart from any work of the kind hitherto produced. It is by no means so abstruse as the *trios* of Beethoven, (the great ones,) still less does it emulate the deeper intricacy of those of Mendelssohn, and further off than ever is it from the enormous complexities of the *trio* in E minor, of Spohr—the only work of the kind which has proceeded from the fertile pen of that great master. A tolerable pianist—a good second-rate violinist—and a moderately-skilful violoncellist—may easily master this *trio*, with satisfaction to themselves, and pleasure to the hearers; and its excessive beauty cannot fail of conducing to its extended popularity, when once it shall become known. * * *

We must next speak of the SCHERZOS, of which there are three, each deserving individual notice, both on account of rare merit and distinct character. The first, in B minor, known in England as "*Le Banquet Infernal*," has a wildness and a *grotesquerie* about it, which, in addition to its immense difficulties, will prevent its immediate appreciation by any but thorough musicians. A careful investigation, however, of the materials of which it is composed, cannot fail of inducing a comprehension of what, at first, might have appeared almost incomprehensible, and that once obtained, the path is open to the hearty admiration which must inevitably follow. With Chopin's music, the intellect must be satisfied ere the heart can be touched;—but once obtain the sanction of the intelligence—once render clear the artful labyrinth which the philosophical composer has imagined—one catch a sight of his design and encompass his meaning—and enthusiasm immediately usurps the place of frigid analysis—the heart sits on the throne but now occupied by the judgment. We know no better instance of what we have often asserted to our musical friends—viz.—that in Chopin's music, what frequently appears dryest and most uninviting on a first and superficial acquaintance, becomes, on a closer intimacy, matter of such evident and undeniable beauty, that you are astonished how you could ever have presumed to question its supremacy, or doubt of its transcendent excellence. And so, this *Scherzo* in B minor, which at first appears crude and obscure, in process of time comes out as clear as the noon, without a speck or flaw, without, in fact a single blemish of any kind; and we venture to predict, that those, who at first will hardly be persuaded to look into it, terrified by its seeming vagueness and complexity, will, in the end, make it a stock-piece for performance, either at home or abroad. The second *Scherzo* in D flat, though not a whit less mystical and abstruse, is infinitely less sombre than its predecessor, and is likely to encounter a larger number of admirers, both on a first acquaintance and after a longer intimacy. It is in the brilliant style, and for pure effect is equal to any of the most popular pieces of Thalberg, besides being immeasurably superior, in a musical point of view. The third *Scherzo*, in C sharp minor, is the most *recherché* of the three, and altogether one of the most extraordinary of the works of Chopin. For wild and unearthly grandeur, it may vie with the best movements of the same kind that have proceeded from the pen of Beethoven, and though extravagantly rhapsodical in its outline, and almost catachrestical in

the strangeness and rude texture of its motives, it lacks none of the essentials of classical and fine music, being symmetrical in its wandering, appropriate in its oddity, (for it will be admitted that a grotesque subject must require grotesque handling—and here both subject and handling are grotesque,) continuous in its mysticism.

(Conclusion next week.)

For Dwight's Journal of Music.

SHELL AND KERNEL.

[From the German of GROEN.]

A tavern, small and slight of build,
A withered wreath for sign!
Within, a matchless cellar, filled
With cool and golden wine!

A window full of broken pots—
With blooming roses crowned!
Within, grave pates, with happy thoughts,
The table sitting round!

A little church, half gone to dust,
The gate-way choked and low;
Within, devotion, hope and trust,
And music's heavenly flow!

A coachman blind, with horses lame,
And, dragging through the sand,
A rickety coach, and in the same
The fairest maid in the land!

A naked, hoary, rocky vale,—
Within, fresh fountains leaping!
Old ruins, desolate and pale,—
Within, green ivy creeping!

Ay, look at me, the traveller, here,
With wind and sunshine tanned,
My cap and coat this many a year
All gray with dust and sand!

Yet in my breast spring-breezes blow,
And wake life's morning-hours,
With blue of heaven, fresh green, and glow
Of music and of flowers!

Kernel and shell are two things, then—
This truth has travel taught!
Crack nuts or travel, gentlemen,
If you believe it not!

C. T. B.

For Dwight's Journal of Music.

From the Country.

NATICK, Nov. 15, 1856.

It snows. The weather is growing breezy and freezy, and making poor mortals wheezy and sneezy. Mr. Frost has been hard at work o' nights, and with the aid of *Eurus, Notusque*, and him whom one of my neighbors calls "Old Borax," has ruined the Great Painter's picture, of which I wrote you in my last. I did not think then that I should keep the world so long waiting for farther news from this metropolis. The delay may be attributed to pressure of business, or to preoccupation with the affairs of the nation, or to an alarming state of health, or to a failure on the part of the post-office; in short, to any cause but indolence and forgetfulness of duty.

Doubtless it will be gratifying to the public to learn that on the 15th ultimo, the morning after I sent you my letter, the labor upon our common began, and now all is reduced to its primitive flatness; the hillocks and mounds have been laid low, and all the rough places are smooth. Our bosoms are filled with hope that this event is but a precursor of all those improvements mentioned in my catalogue, and if so we shall never rest until the school-house has a bell, and the church has its stone and chain fence finished.

We have had exciting times. Politics have raged rampantly. Speeches have been made, and truths uttered, and arguments enforced; but alack! truth is now, as eighteen hundred years ago to the Jews, a stumbling block, and to our "Greeks" foolishness. But still we have had glorious moments. One eve-

ning a Demosthenes from Lowell addressed the "Greeks" in the school house—a realization of Raphael's cartoon, "The school at Athens"; and as by that time the new band had achieved a tune, sonorous metal blew us martial sounds. It was a great occasion!

This tune was one of the most neutral tunes I have heard. It was at all times ready—*semper paratus*—and spake in encouraging strains to every party in succession. It must not be inferred that our men of brass have not added to their list of pieces—that their repertory consists of but one tune all told; by no means; they practice like heroes, and what with their public performances and private rehearsals, I have grown anxious lest the sad fate overtake them of the man immortalized by Hood, who blew his face to a point! Upon consideration, however, I think Hood's man must have been a performer upon some reed instrument, and that the blowers of brass are rather bound to blow themselves away body and breeches, until nothing is left of our brass band but a row of heads with spherical cheeks, like so many cherubim from old tombstones, barring the wings. If this event occurs, I will send you word. Will not brass bands take this subject into serious consideration?

One of my neighbors informed me the other day that Natick is getting to be one of the most "popular" towns about. I thought of this election day, when more than eight hundred votes were cast, where I can remember thirty-five or forty at the most as the usual number. This is indicated too by the constant use of our school-house hall o' nights; one night a fair to assist a feeble religious society; another night a fair for the Methodist organ purchase; then a political meeting; then a lecture for some benevolent object; next a series of lectures on "Biology," with special reference to the ology of the pocket; and so might the list be quite indefinitely extended. Then again there are our weekly police reports, in which the names of my old schoolmates figure as justices and counsel. I went in to hear a trial the other day, and it seemed for all the world but another of the moot courts our old debating club used to hold, as I looked upon Justice Morse and the lawyers, until the anxious faces of the culprits showed me that it was not boys' play. Then I felt, "I am growing old, John," alas and alack-a-day! and that the children already sit in the seats of their fathers. Speaking of children, the little ones, whose name is legion, are a constant marvel to me. I know that in the order of nature, children, like offences, must needs come, and that there is no woe denounced against those by whom they come. But when they go trooping by in squads, and I inquire: "The fathers, where are they?" and learn that they for their pa and ma-ternity go back only to the boys and girls of my school days, here comes in the wonder. You remember the pious epitaph upon the infant:

"She sprang up as a hoppergrass,
And was cut down as a sparrowgrass!"

The multitude of little folks seems to me to have sprung up like the "hoppergrasses." Heaven forefend that they be cut down like the sparrowgrasses!

You know what exquisite weather we had on Wednesday. I used up the afternoon in a walk. We have beautiful walks here, if they are not yet known extensively. Our ponds and hills, if destitute of grandeur and sublimity, have as much quiet and rural beauty as you will often find. My walk was to the hill country. In the eastern part of the town we have four beautiful, smooth, rounded hills, in a perfect line from North to South—Pegan, Carver, Broad's, and a fourth, whose name is yet unknown to the historic muse. It was to the summit of Broad's that I made my way, and a delightful hour I had there. To the passenger on the railroad, which follows the depression dividing Broad's from

the hill Nameless, the elevation is not at all mark-worthy; and yet when you are there, there is a wide extent of country in view, and a high degree of beauty to reward the ascent. To the northwest the eye overlooks the two or three hundred houses of our village, catching a glimpse of Cochituate Pond beyond, and wanders away over Framingham, until it rests upon the blue mass of Wachusett; and to the North a line of dim and misty points in the horizon, we recognize as the Monadnock and other hills of New Hampshire. Extensive tracts of woodland add a peculiar charm to the entire view to me, and it is a serious cause of regret that I had not strength to visit this spot when, not brown, but brilliant-hued Autumn was here in all her glory.

South-easterly I have the valley of the Charles spreading out, immediately after passing between Pegan and Carver, into a broad and beautiful vale, and giving me an uninterrupted view, away to the high hills of Milton. That part of the South village of our town which is spread out upon Eliot plain is in sight just far enough below and at just the right distance to be picturesque. The river, which is excessively winding, peeps out here and there from the woods along its shores, and from the brown remains of the foliage of deciduous trees rise glorious masses of the dark green pines. Perhaps the view down this vale is a little better when taken from Carver. When I was a child Carver was covered with a noble forest of chestnut, hickory and pine; and I can recall as distinctly as the events of yesterday, the strange and then inexplicable feelings with which, after filling my basket with nuts, I used to stand and gaze upon the villages, the winding river, the beautiful swell of Pegan, the dark woods, the farm houses away in the distance, silent as the abodes of death, and the heights of Milton clad in robes of deep blue, while the autumn winds whispered solemnly to the pines or chatted cheerfully with the other trees, and the sound of the rushing of the water at the milldam came up the hill, swelling or dying away with each change in the intensity of the breeze. Several times, after long periods, even years intervening, I have ascended the dear old hill, and making all due allowance for the influence of early association, I still find the view so beautiful, that I can understand now what I then but felt.

But we will go back to Broad's.

The spirit of speculation is now rife in our town. A has bought this farm, B that; C is laying out house lots here and D there; E stands ready to invest, and F is equally willing to sell, and so it goes. While on the hill I too began to speculate. Not in the same manner though; all the money speculations in which I engage take place when I am on the committee of ways and means, speculating how to settle my board bills. I began to speculate upon a point, which just now is creating great division in our "Natick Society of Antiquaries," which association, counting all the active, honorary and corresponding members, consists of two persons—Austin B. and a certain correspondent of Dwight's Journal of Music, who may as well not be named. Now this question upon which such opposite opinions have been advanced, to the great benefit of archaeological science and the manufacturers of ink, is, as to the route which the apostle Eliot, of blessed memory, that devout servant of God, was wont to take upon his Thursday visits to the Indian plantation, which then occupied the beautiful hills and valley of which I have been writing. You must know that "Ye Indian plantation" at Natick was originally a part of the town of Dedham, and I had always taken it for granted that Mr. Eliot's road hither was by way of that town and through a part of the present town of Dover, by which route he would first reach "ye street on ye southe side of ye river Charles, so called by ye famous Captaine John Smith, in honor of ye most high and mightie Prince Charles." My oppo-

ment, however, at a meeting of our society, suggested that this was wrong; he being of opinion that the way from Roxbury led through what is now Newton, and crossed the river "att ye great fording place," now the Lower Falls, in the town aforesaid. Considering the great importance of the question at issue, I may affirm that its discussion has thus far been carried on with all due decorum, and that no very severe personalities have been uttered—at all events not in comparison with what we have become habituated to in discussing politics. Now, from the summit of Broad's the whole country concerned is before one, and I find, on the most careful examination, that it could make but very little difference in distance which course the reverend preacher adopted, and the other party has as much to favor his position *a priori* as I. But who ever heard of a member of an antiquarian society admitting such a thing to his opponent? No, sir! though convinced, I shall argue still. My long argument is well under weigh and will occupy half the next volume of the society's proceedings. [I mention this as literary intelligence from Natick.] I will not go into the matter now, as your Journal is not particularly devoted to such discussions, but leave you to read the entire controversy, when printed, or the review of it, which of course will appear in the North American, as you may choose. I assure you it is very clear to my mind that Mr. Eliot came the Dover route, or that he might have done so had he wished, which is sufficient ground for the argument. There may be a spice of vanity in the confession, but fancy sees in some future edition of "The Quarrels of Authors," a large space devoted to a history of the great controversy on Rev. John Eliot's road to Natick plantation!

A. W. T.

For Dwight's Journal of Music.

Sacred Music at Nazareth, Pa.

Nazareth Hall has just completed its hundredth year, and as the celebration of this centenary epoch is signalized by sacred music, some particulars respecting it may not be devoid of interest to you.

The Hall, which now is, and has been for the greater part of the past century, a boarding school, was originally built for the purpose of accommodating Count Zinzendorf, who was expected to remain and occupy it on his second visit to America, an event which never took place. The Hall was subsequently used as a place of worship, and the upper apartments for school purposes. The whole building is now appropriated to the use of the school, and the religious services are performed in a new church of modern construction.

On the present occasion the interior of this edifice was tastefully decorated, and much labor had been bestowed in decking the altar with hemlock wreaths and various floral devices. On the sides of the altar were transparent inscriptions in German, being select and appropriate passages from Scripture. The whole appearance of these decorations, intimating to the observer, as he entered the chapel, that one hundred years had just elapsed, and that a second century was about being entered upon, was interesting and suggestive. This mode of adding the designs of art to the observances of the festival is one of the marked peculiarities of the Moravian *cultus*, and on every special occasion the boughs of the perennial hemlock, the evergreen laurel, and the trailing mosses are called into requisition to lend their aid to the sacred joys of the festival.

All that is poetical in religion is resorted to, to

make the occasion truly festive in its character and an event of spiritual pleasure.

The early matutinal service was opened by the usual choral on trombones, which was then followed by a full orchestral anthem of old classic composition, a species of music of which the Moravians possess a large fund.

The well-known quartet of trombones upon nearly all occasions ushers in the solemnities of the festival, and as the old German choral, with its perfect harmony and divested of all superficial attire, falls upon the ear through those long-drawn wind notes, a feeling of pleasant and solemn composure invests the soul.

The services of the first day's celebration of this centenary, including the evening performances, were all blended with orchestral and choral song. In this last description of music the old German choral is that which is still chiefly in vogue amongst us. The tunes in use at various periods among the Moravians number more than five hundred, although those most generally sung do not exceed one hundred. These chorals having their origin during and before Luther's time, have been handed down, with various improvements in the arrangement of voices, to the present generation. Many of the chorals are of Moravian origin, having been composed by eminent organists of an earlier day, among whom were Jaeschke, Cröger, and others.

The choral in the opening of Mendelssohn's *Paulus* is also found in the depository of Moravian hymns, and is frequently sung in church services.

Respecting the pure tendency of this species of sacred music, there never appears to have been any difference of opinion. The Moravian choral, as sung by a whole congregation, with a good intermixture of bass and tenor voices, is altogether inimitable; and although it would seem necessary that the mind should be educated and led upwards into this kind of harmony, it is certain that when once there it will never depart from it. The merit of this sacred music is found in its undying nature; those who have been educated in it never forsake it, and the melody heard in youth grows sweeter in old age.

The organ is nearly always used in accompaniment, but there is a solemn beauty in the four-voice choral, without the organ, that almost gives it the preference. In all the open air performance, this effect in pure vocal harmony is sensibly observed.

In the memory of all the older Moravians, the trombone is an endeared instrument. Its harmonious tones, sent forth in the quiet evening from the belfry, tells you invariably of the departure of some earthly spirit, and the well-known chorals that are chosen for this occasion, become the recorded poetry of the heart.

The jubilee was extended to a second day, and closed in the usual manner of the higher Moravian festivals, with the Love Feast and Sacrament.

As regards the former ceremonial, I have to observe that it received its origin from the *Agape* of the early Christian church, and has been held in strict observance since the days of Count Zinzendorf. As to its import and the feeling this simple rite inspires, little can be said in the way of description. As an old institution of a people and a church, it stands far above criticism. The love feast is always rendered a joyous occasion

by the usual good old classic music, performed in full chorus, with orchestral accompaniment, and by the singing of the time-honored choral. Without this adjunct, indeed, it (as well as all other festive solemnities) would seem uninspiring and cold, and though poetry and music are not religion, yet they prove in many instances the avenues to spirituality and the guide to heavenly hope.

The century just past has been the first of the existence of Nazareth Hall, although the Moravian history itself has already progressed far into the second century. The primitive institutions of its people are still in some measure retained, although, being of exclusively German origin, they are beginning to give way to and blend with American feeling and modes of thought.

The poetical ground work of such a *cultus* as that of the Moravians originates altogether among a different people from our own; and although it has been for more than a century transplanted and nurtured among us, the age we live in, with its false pretences, is making inroads upon its genuineness and threatens to destroy it.

To preserve intact the religious rituals of a regularly organized Christian life, such as the Moravian communities have exhibited, the smaller rural villages and towns are the most appropriate places. Here, where a moderate share of musical talent can easily be found, cultivated and preserved, and where the rites of a refined culture can be enjoyed without running into conflict with conventionality and the false glitter of society, a picture of the Zinzendorffian mode of life and worship is only really found.

Here every sacred occasion, every memorial day, is sanctified and enlivened by the choral and the anthem; the former being the music of the Bach and the old Moravian composition; the latter, in addition to many original pieces, consisting of selections from Haydn's "Creation," Handel's "Messiah," and sometimes Mozart and Beethoven.

When Christmas comes round with its ever-green decorations amid the snows, the sacred eve with its emblems, its rejoicings, its love feast and its dramatic and poetical portrayings of an event which renders the close of the year precious to the Christian world, you may hear from me again on the subject of a Nazareth and Bethlehem Christmas.

Yours, J. H.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, NOV. 22, 1856.

Italian Opera—"The North Star."

We conclude our hasty sketch of this comic opera of Meyerbeer, having already despatched the best part of the music with the first act.

The second act is purely military—the parade and pleasures of the camp, the Russian camp. There is rebellion ripening here against the Czar, our old friend Peter, the irritable, drinking, and yet it would seem not good-for-nothing lover, here present in disguise, ready to declare himself in the right moment, shame the rebels back to loyalty, and lead on to victory. His Catharine, unbeknown to him, as he to her, is here also in the disguise of a simple soldier, the recruit in her brother George's place. But the history is a

mere contrivance whereby to string together a series of military tableaux, full of pretty puppet-show effects on a large scale, with music corresponding. The curtain rises on a scene of tents and soldiers, some in line, some carelessly grouped, some dancing, while the orchestra plays a succession of quaint dance measures. Corporal Gritzenko, more of a dandy than ever, figures with grotesque importance in the foreground, drilling the young recruits, a pretty squad of young girl soldiers. Indeed half the army are women in warlike habiliments, which lends a French piquancy to the scene. A song in honor of the cavalry, a lusty bugle strain, is sung with painful fidelity by that knight of the rueful countenance, the tenor ARNOLDI, in the character of commander of the Cossacks. The corporal's pride is touched, and he must sing a glorification of the infantry, drilling the young recruits while the orchestra preludes. The song is accompanied by all the chorus bands with regularly recurring *t-r-r-r-r-rums* in imitation of the drum roll, two jauntily dressed vivandieres leading off at the head of either regiment (Mme. SIEDENBURG and Miss PYNE.) It is a very ingenious piece of musical and puppet-show effect, sparkling and droll enough, and just the thing to take with an audience who want only to be amused. The next music is full of muttered thunder, as of coming storm, a chorus of conspirators; death to the tyrant Czar! &c.

The troops defile before their general and leave the stage, when a tent is set up, which enter Peter as simple captain, with Danilowitz, his faithful follower, as his lieutenant and boon companion. They are in for a jolly carouse. Catharine the while has been stationed sentinel outside the tent. Our two heroes drink and chant a bacchanalian stave, which has a certain charm of wildness, what with the instrumentation. The duo becomes a trio as the young sentinel's curiosity expresses itself about what is passing within. She peeps through the folds of the tent, and judge of her surprise when she sees her Peter, her old carpenter friend and lover, in epaulettes, and with him the pastry cook! Of course some fine bursts of roudades and cadenzas here for Mme. LAGRANGE. The two challenge each other still to drink; alas! the old sin of her Peter—she marks it too well. The two pretty vivandieres, who have caught Peter's eye, are marched in to grace their carouse. This introduces an elaborate Quintet and Sextuor, which includes first a *Chant Bacchique* by Peter, then some very piquant couplets by the vivandieres, about soldier life, in which voices and instruments keep up a prolonged imitation of the rattling of dice and other soldier-like accomplishments, the two men joining in the laugh. Both parts of this duet run high and are full of florid execution, to which the ladies were equal, save that the Siedenburger lacked power of voice. Poor Catharine must peep again. She has been revelling in melodious raptures over the presence and glory of her lover; but now what does she see? the faithless knight caressing those vivandieres! A change comes o'er the spirit of her dream and o'er—the orchestra, and her outraged feelings make out a quintet with the others; Peter and Danilowitz wooing, the vivandieres coquetishly struggling, Catharine alone in earnest, Mme. Lagrange gives great force here to a low declamatory monotone passage, in which every

note trembles with rage: *Dans ma haine profonde Qu'ici je les confonde!* and then to the freer outburst of lightning-like soprano in *Que le ciel seconde*, while the *charmant badinage* of the others goes on. Corporal Gritzenko comes round to relieve guard, and detects our sentinel peeping; a quarrel follows and a smart slap on the corporal's face; the culprit is dragged before Captain Peter; but his brain is clouded with the fumes of wine; he recognizes nothing, will not be importuned, and commands that the offender be shot. In vain the pretty recruit calls upon her Peter; in vain the music of that sentimental air of her's (referred to several times before); she is hurried off and supposed shot. We should mention before this the sextuor occasioned by the entrance into the tent of Ismaeloff, the Cossack chief, with a letter of grave import, apparently, to which Peter is insensible. This sextuor is chiefly remarkable for the difficult unison passages of the three sopranos, in broken chords, continually modulated, and ranging to the upper C.

Peter recovers his senses and recalls the fatal order just too late. The rest of the music is all military. To the sound of the "Sacred March," (a common-place, noisy affair enough) the conspirator generals and armies take the oath to kill the Czar. He overhears all, warned by a letter found upon Catharine, who is supposed to have escaped the fusillade and plunged into the river and been drowned. (There is no lack of devices to make the story hang together.) Peter reveals himself, brings them all to their knees, and turns their arms against the foes, whose distant march is heard approaching to help them against him. Here we have a large, bewildering combination of all sorts of bands, from all sorts of regiments, playing all sorts of marches, *fanfaras*, *pas redoublés*, &c., the effect of all which is a showy, but decidedly heavy finale, more "stunning" than it is edifying.

Act III. is eked out with a transparent poverty of musical material. For the most part the old ideas reshaped. After a symphony of some length, not very interesting, the curtain rises on a rich apartment in the palace of the Czar. Peter, in all his power and splendor, still pines for Catherine. The sentimental monarch has even sought relief in practising in an amateur way his old labors of the saw and plane. He commences with an andante strain of melancholy reminiscence, which gives AMODIO an opportunity, almost his only one in this opera, to do himself some justice. There is a buffo trio, where Gritzenko enters, trembling before majesty, claiming promotion for the—*slap* he got on duty in the tent scene; *le soufflet, honorable, remarquable, favorable, inpayable!* This is somewhat funny, but not so funny as it is long. Now enter the bridal couple, Prascovia and George, who sing *naturely* enough of their long foot journey from Finland, made so light by love and happy union. The corporal recognizing the real recruit, frightens them with announcing that he must be shot, which makes another grotesque duo between Mme. MARETZKE and Herr QUINT (called QUINTO).

We pass on to the entrance of Catharine, who has lost her senses. Of course one of those interesting mad scenes, *a la Lucia*, *Sonnambula*, *Elvira*, &c., &c., in which the music is full of reminiscences out of the first act. The Czar has contrived an outward machinery to meet her mind's spontaneous workings. He has even built a min-

iature Finland village, as in the first act, with the house and the chapel, and the carpenters at work, and so on, and has had her old associates imported into Russia for the purpose, all which is disclosed at the withdrawing of a curtain at the back of the stage. You hear the tenor coryphæus again lead off the opening chorus, and you hear the pastry cook's song, and the wedding chorus, her consciousness the while returning and expressing itself in florid and varied bits of fragmentary song, much of it with harp accompaniment. Allusions to the camp scene come back too in the music. And finally a florid prelude on a flute sounds from within; the old air which George and Peter played; she echoes it, two flutes come in, to which she sings the brilliant and arduous bravura piece, made so familiar by JENNY LIND, as a piece from the "Camp of Silesia." How exquisitely this was done by Mme. Lagrange, how her voice revelled in those flute-like passages, and what rich tenderness its middle tones had where contrasted with the flute, we will not undertake to describe. It ends with recognition and Peter making her his Empress,—the orchestra for finale repeating the opening military passage of the overture. We should mention also a cantabile tenor aria by Danilowitz, with pleasingly novel accompaniment of harp and flutes running through octaves in thirds,—a piece of which we find nothing in the piano score, and which, but for the quaint accompaniment, we should say was certainly an Italian interpolation,—but in which BRIGNOLI showed the sweetness of his voice and cultivated style to much advantage.

Such is the substance of *L'Etoile du Nord*. As a work of curious invention and contrivance in the art of imitative phrasing, in the first place, and still more in the art of brilliant and unique orchestral framing, it offers much to the critic who is mainly curious in such things. But as a lyrical drama, as a product of creative imagination, it does not appeal very strongly. The plot is absurd; its comedy, what there is of it, painfully labored. We can scarcely call it a comic opera, for there is no genuine spontaneous humor in the music. In point of humor and of spontaneity of any kind compare it for a moment with the operas of Mozart or the immortal "Barber" of Rossini! There is the natural play of genius; here the hard effort by will and skilful calculation to contrive things that shall seem funny. Plainly it is the comedy of a very sober man; it did not come out of a humorous nature. If it is not intended to be taken seriously, it is a very serious attempt to be playful. It is neither comedy nor tragedy, but rather melodrama, to which Robert Schumann might, were he here, apply the term "puppet-show music" with at least as much reason as he did to Donizetti's *Favorita*. What a relief is the naive, gushing melody of a Rossini after all these curious and in detail often captivating contrivances! The absurdity of the plot (by SCRIBE), however, is accounted for by the fact that it was necessary to work up fragments of earlier half-finished operas, "Vielka," the "Camp of Silesia," and what not—savings up of earlier ideas, meteor fragments of demolished planets—into the new "Star."

One proof that it falls below the standard of a true Art creation is the fact that the freshness of the music and the interest of the whole degenerate from act to act. In this respect, too, how it

contrasts with the immortal masterpieces! In *Don Juan*, even supposing for the moment that its plot is equally absurd, how the inner meaning grows and grows, and comes out in the music, newer and richer and grander to the end! With all its wealth of matter, its curious variety of contents, its pretty, quaint conceits, its striking combinations and orchestral settings, the "North Star" betrays a painful lack of the imaginative fusing quality of genius. Nothing develops itself as it were spontaneously, by an inward necessity of nature, out of the rest, but all is there by will and make-shift calculation. It is, as we have said before, the music of *effect* and not of genius. It is over-ingenious and not inspired. How HEINE could ever characterize the author of such *effect* music as a man of "conviction," beyond all composers, is more than we can understand. There may be earnest, indefatigable will, without much deep conviction, which implies faith, of any kind. One who is so very earnest about the shows of things, rather betrays his lack of deep conviction of the unseen realities. And such being the case, it is not to be wondered that *L'Etoile du Nord*, by its very succession of interminable brilliancies, became fatiguing before it was half done, and left one with uninspired and jaded senses at the end. We could not but be reminded at last of an interminable torchlight procession.

The opera closed on Saturday afternoon with a mangled and indifferent performance of *Masaniello* and some of the "gems" of *L'Etoile* for the benefit of conductor MARETZKE. The parts of Mme. MARETZKE and of BRIGNOLI were well sustained in the former, and Mlle. LAVIGNE was graceful and expressive in her pantomime as Fenella. But the music of Auber's work seemed very tame and common. By far the best parts are those which have been so long whistled in the streets. Mme. LAGRANGE made amends in her scenes from *L'Etoile*.

Chamber Music.

MR. J. C. D. PARKER'S SOIREE, at Chickering's, last Saturday evening, was a very pleasant affair, and we wished there were more people to enjoy it. Here is the programme, quite a choice one:

PART I.

- 1—Trio No. 1, in E flat,.....Beethoven.
- 2—Aria from *Le Nozze di Figaro*,.....Mozart.

Mrs. J. H. LONG.

- 3—Piano Solos: by.....
{ Bach.
Chopin.
Mendelssohn.

PART II.

- 1—Andante Pastorale, for Clarinet,.....Crusell.

THOMAS RYAN.

- 2—Sonata No. 2, in A,.....Beethoven.
- 3—Serenade, from Tennyson's "Maud,"

J. C. D. PARKER.

Mrs. J. H. LONG.

Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the roses blown.

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near;"
And the white rose weeps, "She is late, she is late;"
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear;"
And the lily whispers, "I wait."

- 4—Quintette in E flat, for Piano and Stringed Instruments,.....Schumann.

The Trio was interesting as being the first of the numbered and published works of Beet-

hoven. It is less original in matter and in treatment, more in the vein of Mozart and of Haydn, and the composer's individuality is less pronounced in it, than in the works by which he is now most known. But knowing that great genius chiefly as we find him in the thick of life's hard battle, in his profounder, sadder, and yet gloriously triumphant works, it is pleasant for once to trace back his stream of life to where it sparkled in the sunshine of young, wholesome impulses and faculties, joyously eager for exercise; pleasant to have him where he knew joy, without going through Titanic spiritual trials to find it. A cheerful grace and elegance and melodious flow of strong, full harmony, characterizes the quicker movements, while the Adagio breathes a deep and tender sentiment. It is wonderful for an *Opus* 1, to say the least, and indicates those rare peculiarities which were developed later. Mr. PARKER played the piano part with great neatness, precision and delicacy. So he did the Sonata (one of the three dedicated to Haydn), save where a little nervous embarrassment caused him to miss a note or two in the first part. His chief want for a player of Beethoven, is the want of fire and energetic accent, and also of steady a *tempo* movement; there was sometimes a little dallying; and the second movement (*Largo appassionato*) was taken a little too quick, and had not quite that grand and solemn tread, nor quite that nervous staccato in the short notes of the bass, which the character of the piece has seemed to us to require. A little too much tendency also to break the chords, which weakens the impression, and impairs the Beethoven-like decision. There were such great excellencies in Mr. Parker's playing, and the pieces had been so faithfully and intelligently studied, that it is but due to the young artist to confess these deductions.

Of the three smaller piano pieces, that by Bach, one of his innumerable happy little fancies, called, we believe, an *Echo*, which we never heard before, was to our mind the most satisfactory in the rendering. It was indeed exquisitely neat and clear and finished. Mr. Parker has all the delicacy and fineness for Chopin, but needs to make it more alive, to put more fire into it. The Song without words by Mendelssohn, a rapid movement from the posthumous set, was finely played. The great feature of the concert was that glorious piano Quintet of Schumann, in which he was accompanied by the Mendelssohn Quintette Club. The inspiring energy of the Allegro, and the wild, dirge-like character of the slow movement, made their mark as deep as ever. It is a composition which we shall count it loss not to hear once at least in every winter.

The Andante by Crusell was highly relished. We like the rich, vivacious tones of the clarinet, and enjoy Mr. RYAN's playing of it. But in the quintet accompaniment to that song of Mozart: *Voi chi sapete*, the whole seemed drowned in excess of clarinet sound; the whole accompaniment was heavy, compared with Mozart's light and delicate instrumentation; a mere piano-forte would have been better. Mrs. LONG sang it very pleasingly, but wanted more life. In Mr. Parker's song from "Maud," she was warmly encored, as well as the song itself, which is graceful, and in the setting of the last verse, especially the last two lines, happy; but the principal melody seems to us too light, and not to have seized the spirit of the words.

The Concert as a whole gave generally great pleasure, and we trust that Mr. Parker will not be discouraged by the smallness of his audience from giving more such evenings. He is an artist of a true and earnest spirit, and is constantly improving and deepening in artistic character and power.

MENDELSSOHN QUINTETTE CLUB.—The first concert of the eighth season came off in Chickering's rooms on Tuesday evening, before quite a numerous and appreciative audience. The members of the Club were warmly greeted. They consist, as last year, of Messrs. AUGUST FRIES, first violin, CARL MEISEL, second do., GUSTAV KREB and THOMAS RYAN tenors, and WULF FRIES, violoncello. The programme was a very fine one and just long enough, as follows:

PART I.

1. Fifth Quartet in A, (first time),.....Mozart
 Allegro—Minuetto—Andante—Finale, Allegro.
2. Piano Trio, op. 70, No. 2, in E flat,.....Beethoven
 Andante and Allegro non troppo—Allegretto—Allegretto non troppo—Finale, Allegro.

Messrs. LEONHARD, MEISEL, and W. FRIES.

PART II.

3. Adagio from the Second Concerto for Clarinette,....Spohr
 THOMAS RYAN.
4. Piano Solo: Polonaise, op. 68, in A,.....Chopin
 HUGO LEONHARD.
5. Third Quartet in D, No. 1, op. 44,.....Mendelssohn
 Molto allegro vivace—Minuetto, Allegretto—Andante con moto—Finale, Presto con brio.

The new Mozart Quartet made a delightful impression, played so smoothly as it was, and with such spirit, just blending and individualizing of parts, and with regard to light and shade. There is a most genial, spontaneous ease in the whole movement of the composition, which makes it seem simple, while it is a masterpiece of science, and comes over us as a breath from a pure, intellectual height of experience, remote from all that can be common-place or vulgar. The variations of the Andante are wonderfully imaginative and singular, especially one in which the whole strain is accompanied throughout by a mystical sort of drum-beat, first on the violoncello and then on the viola, till the second and finally the first violin get possessed by its rhythm.—The Mendelssohn Quintet in D took one back to the early days of the Quintette Club, and was always a prodigious favorite with the *habitués* of their concerts and rehearsals. It is one of the most characteristic works of Mendelssohn, full of fire, and rich in ideas marvellously well developed. The clarinet Adagio was one of the richest and most enjoyable productions of Spohr that we remember to have listened to. The fresh reed tones relieve in a measure the peculiar monotony of Spohr.

Mr. HUGO LEONARD, the young pianist from the Leipzig Conservatoire, a pale youth, with intellectual countenance, the long hair of "Young Germany," and a look of nervous energy, made his debut to great advantage as a player of Beethoven. He plays with rare distinctness, fire and firmness, tenderly sparing and exhibiting at the same time all the delicate little flowers of feeling and of fancy that lie scattered along the bold, exulting course of the inspired Titan. He has it in his head first, and brings it out with a will and with a sympathy. He seems to carve each musical idea out of his instrument with the sharp and positive, yet delicate outline of a sculptor. There is remarkable breadth and fulness in his touch and execution. Yet we should say his playing is more from the head than from the feeling. There is nerve in his playing, but he seems happily free from nervousness. In that

bold, heroic, thoroughly Polish *Polonaise*, too, the pianist seemed to have chosen the side of Chopin most congenial to him. How he would be in the dreamy, poetic reveries and love yearnings of that master we cannot tell; but we have rarely heard one of the strong and fiery pieces executed more effectively. The execution was admirable, and it tasks execution to the utmost. We trust Mr. Leonhard will give us more of his artistic quality, and that the coming concerts of the Club will prove as satisfactory and enlivening as this good beginning.

New Music.

We have before us a large pile of the recent issues from our various publishing houses, among which are not a few of real permanent value. We have only time to mention some of the more important now, reserving them for fuller notice.

Messrs. G. ANDRÉ & Co., of Philadelphia, send us three posthumous works of MOZART, now for the first time published. (Mr. G. André is one of the Andrés of Offenbach, Germany, who own the larger portion of the Mozart manuscripts.) The three pieces are:—1. A Litany (*Litania di venerabile altaris*), for four voices, with organ or piano accompaniment. Orchestral parts may be had. This was composed in 1776. 2. One of his earlier operas, called *L'Oca del Cairo* (The Goose of Cairo)—of course an opera buffa—in two acts; vocal and piano score. 3. Another early opera, called *Lo Sposo Deluso, ossia: La rivalità di tre Donne per un solo Amante* (The Deceived Husband, or the rivalry of three ladies for one lover); opera buffa in two acts, vocal score, and also a piano-forte arrangement for four hands. If not among the greatest of the author's works, these cannot but be interesting to every lover of Mozart. We shall give soon a more minute account of them, as well as of other useful publications from André & Co.

From Mr. F. MEYER, Buffalo, N. Y., who is connected with the house of Meyer in Brunswick, Germany, we have a very neat and serviceable piano and vocal score of *Don Giovanni*, with Italian and German words. The book is in 180 pp. of oblong form, clearly and handsomely engraved, and costs the very moderate sum of \$2 50. By his card in another column it will be seen that the same gentleman is agent in America for the sale of the same Brunswick editions of the seven principal operas of Mozart, which we can commend after considerable use of them.

OLIVER DITSON, of our city, issues weekly and daily an incredible variety of music of all forms, styles and qualities, from the most popular clap-trap to the immortal classics and true living works of genius. Among the most important of his recent issues are *The Well-tempered Clavichord* (*Clavessin bien temperé*) of JOHN SEBASTIAN BACH, being the celebrated forty-eight Preludes and Fugues in all the major and minor keys;—a work which all true pianists and indeed all musicians, who lay claim to true musicianship, for many years have made the foundation of their studies. One who has mastered the "Well-tempered Clavichord" is equal to almost any difficulties within the legitimate sphere of piano music. Nay even a Liszt and a Thalberg have this culture quietly underlying their own modern, freer seeming and more dazzling peculiarities. They will not all be found merely dry and scientific things for the curious scholar; many of them are exquisite tone-poems, full of the light of fancy, and such as dwell sweetly in the mind through all one's life. No. 1, containing Preludes and Fugues in C and in C minor, are already out. The whole 48 will make two volumes, each \$3; complete, \$5.—Mr. Ditson has also ready several more numbers of those

wonderful Chorales harmonized by BACH, of which we have before spoken.—Also selections from the new oratorio of "Eli," by COSTA, now in rehearsal by the Handel and Haydn Society. Two numbers we already have, viz: a Solo, *The Morning Hymn*, and Duet, *Wherefore is thy soul cast down*,—both beautiful and chaste compositions, considerably Mendelssohnian in style.—Mr. Ditson's catalogue is really a curiosity. It fills 204 closely printed pages, and contains thousands upon thousands of pieces of sheet music, besides eight pages full of titles of books, including operas, masses, oratorios, sonatas, symphonies, Songs without Words, treatises on harmony, and instruction books for voice and every kind of instrument in use,—all of his own publishing.

Musical Intelligence.

MANCHESTER, N. H.—The first of the series of Orchestral Concerts came off last evening, and was a complete success, in every particular. The house was filled, half an hour before the performance was announced to commence, and all seemed eager to hear the first chord, which was struck at eight o'clock. Miss DOANE did her part of the programme to the entire satisfaction of all present, and was loudly encored. She seems to be a particular favorite, and why shouldn't she be? She is certainly a very finished singer.

Mr. KREISSMANN proved himself (if it need be proved,) a thorough bred musician, and sang his songs with much expression; the duets with Miss Doane went off finely.

What can we say of the Orchestra? We surely have never heard such a complete and well drilled band in this city before. The Overture to "Don Juan" opened the Concert, and was well played, as far as we are a judge, and it being one Mozart's best, it would be almost folly for us to say it is anything but a great piece. The Polkas and the March were good, and pleased the little ones much.

The Concert overture, No. 1, of Mr. STRATTON's, brought down a storm of applause, and had to be repeated; this was served the same way the first time it was played, (last year,) and seems to lose nothing by repetition; all considered it the best piece of the evening, [what! better than *Don Juan*?] and no doubt would like to hear it played at every concert. We understand Mr. Stratton's Overtures already number three, and we hope to hear the others during the series. Great credit is due Mr. Stratton for giving us such an interesting concert.—*Manchester Mirror*, 19th.

PHILADELPHIA.—The *City Item* has the following notice of the concert given last week by Mr. BENKERT, a young Philadelphian, who has just returned from musical studies in Germany:

Mr Benkert was assisted by Mlle. D'Ormy, the contralto; Mr. Berner, the new tenor; Mr. Preiser, the violoncellist, and a large deputation of the Musical Fund Society's orchestra, which, under the baton of Leopold Meignen, performed with unusual excellence the work assigned them, doing full justice to Mr. Benkert's overture to *Richilde* and to its part in the *Concerto Irlandaise*. In Mlle. D'Ormy's voice there are some notes very good and some very indifferent; her style is not of the purest, but in opera her acting is said to atone for all her vocal deficiencies. Mr. Berner sang two German ballads, composed by Mr. Benkert, with much feeling and taste. Mr. Preiser performed a violoncello fantasia from *Robert le Diable*, arranged by Kummer, the piano-forte accompaniment being played by Mr. Benkert. Mr. P. overcame some startling difficulties and was warmly applauded; we think, however, we have heard him to greater advantage in other solos; the limited size of the audience may have chilled his usual ardor. Mr. Benkert played several times; his manner is very easy, and devoid of all the nauseating affectations of modern pianists. He does not belong to the brilliant school of performers; his attributes are neatness, clearness and delicacy, and had the instrument, upon which he performed, possessed any tone or excellence, these characteristics of his playing would have been heard to much greater advantage; unfortunately the piano was of that muffled description with which nothing can be done, under any circumstances; it must have left its tone on the other side of the Atlantic. He seems to us a performer likely to show to more advantage in private than in public.

It is of Mr. Benkert's compositions that we would rather speak. His concerto, for piano and orchestra, appeared to us to be the best; it is extremely well written for the solo instrument and the accompaniment is full of beautiful harmony and combinations. It may be justly called a classical work, and shows that the young composer has not only studied in a good school, but has profited by his studies. The overture to "Richilde" is solidly and carefully scored, modelled upon *Lindpainter*, as no one could fail to notice after the "Vampire" overture by that master, which opened

the concert. He was the director of Mr. Benkert's studies during the greater part of our young townsman's European residence, and it is but natural that the pupil's style should resemble that of his instructor. The first movement is full of rich harmony, the second abounds in good violin passages and skilful scoring, but there is a want of a strongly marked subject. This want we felt in some other of his compositions. Mr. Benkert's style is exclusively German, and gave great satisfaction to the audience, which was composed mainly of representatives of that nation. He has evidently been a close student of the theory of musical science, in all its branches, and possesses in himself fully as much, if not more, knowledge than is divided among the majority of American "composers."

Foreign.

PARIS—A letter in the *Courier & Enquirer*, dated Oct 30, describes the hearing at the Italian Opera, of the American cantatrice, Miss JULIANA MAY.

Some weeks since I referred to this young lady as having brought with her from Italy a high reputation, not only as possessing one of the very finest voices (a *soprano sfogato*) in Europe, but as having profited by her two or three years stay in Italy, to perfect herself in her art. Her *début* (as it may be termed) at "the Italians" was, therefore, looked to as an event in the musical world, and you will see by the brief report of that remarkable audition, to which I am unfortunately obliged to confine myself, that neither expectation nor the desire to hear the finest music conveyed by the sweetest organ were disappointed.

Among the auditors of this delightful musical treat, were two persons deeply interested in the result, which, if favorable, would raise up a rival Prima Donna, with (from the youth of the fair aspirant) a probability that if she did not positively supersede them, she might divide with them the favors of the dilettanti of Europe. They had, however, this consolatory circumstance to mitigate any such feeling of apprehension, namely:—a rumor that an arbitrary call from her own country, imperious and irresistible as the ukase of a Czar, had arrived to compel her to appear on her native scene. Whatever that fact and whatever their feelings, Miss May presented herself at the Italian Opera last Friday, accompanied by her mother and some Parisian friends, and was received by the popular proprietor of that establishment, Signor Calzado, and his son, with kindness and respect.

Resolved, it would appear, to place her pretensions in the fullest evidence, Miss May selected for her opening morceau the prayer in Verdi's Opera, the *Duo Foscairi*—a piece which from its difficulty and variety, and its consequent demand upon all the powers of the singer, whether of voice or of execution, is—where the débutante is meant to be treated with severity,—chosen as the test of capability. I think I need offer no further proof of Miss May's unqualified success in this most trying effort, than that, in the course of her performance, it elicited from the gentleman who presided at the pianoforte, and who was, in fact, no less a personage than the *chef d'orchestre*, of the Theatre des Italiens, repeated cries of "Brava!" In these M. Calzado concurred, but Altoni "made no sign," which may fairly be interpreted as a favorable sign for her young rival in perspective.

The next piece, a totally different one in construction and object, "*Di piacer mi balza il cor*," from Rossini's *Gazza Ladra*, was given, by Miss May, most beautifully and effectively, thus proving the versatility of the cantatrice. The first, impassioned and almost violent, required all the resources of the performer for its development, and seemed, in truth, the identical proof she sought for, to display the immense compass, flexibility, and power of her voice, and her brilliancy of execution. The second, so well known to all lovers of music, demanding for its presentation, in the spirit of its immortal composer, voice, grace, sweetness, and finished education. I know not how far it would be Miss May's interest to accept an engagement at the Italian Opera of Paris this season,—crowded as is the list of its Prime Donne—for she would have no fewer than six competitors for public favor, including Grisi, Alboni, Frezzolini, and Piccolomini, and Cattinari, who from their precedence in point of engagement, would assert the prescriptive right to the principal roles of the repertoire of the Italians.

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